Department of Historic Resources
Reconnaissance Level Survey

Isle Of Wight *DHR Id#:* **046-0035**

Resource Identification

Property Name(s): ..... Poplar Mill {Alternate Name}
Wren's Mill {Historic}
Property Date: 1800
Address(s): ..... Route 677 {Current}
County/Independent City: Isle Of Wight
City: .....
State, Zip: .....Virginia
USGS Quad Name: ..... BACONS CASTLE

National Register Eligibility Status
Property is Historic (50 years or older)

Property has been recommended Not Eligible for listing

Resource Description

Primary Resource Exterior Component Description:

Component	Comp Type/Form	Material	Material Treatment
Foundation	Foundation - Solid	Brick	other
Roof	Roof - Gable, Side	Metal	Roof - V-Crimp
Structural System	Structural System - Frame	Wood	Structural System - Weatherboard

WUZIT Count:

No.	Wuzit Types	Historic?
1	Mill	Historic

NR Resource Count:

Individual Resource Information

WUZIT: ..... Mill

Est. Date of Construction: .... 1800 ca {Site Visit}
Primary Resource? ..... Yes
Architectural Style: ..... Other
Interior Plan Type: ..... Other
Accessed? ..... Yes
Number of Stories: 2.0
Condition: ..... Poor
Threats to Resource: ..... Deterioration

Description: Architecture Summary: End Architecture Summary Additions and alterations: End Additions and alterations Interior Description: End Interior Description

Cemetery Information

Bridge Information

National Register Eligibility Information (Intensive Level Survey)

Historic Context(s): ..... Industry/Processing/Extraction

Bibliographic Documentation

Ownership Information

Graphic Media Documentation

Report generated 11/17/04

Department of Historic Resources
Reconnaissance Level Survey

Isle Of Wight **DHR Id#: 046-0035**

Medium	Depository ID #	Photo Depository	Date	File Name
B&W 35mm Photos	2319		1973/7 /99	

Cultural Resource Management (CRM) Events

CRM Event # 1,
Cultural Resource Management Event: ..... Reconnaissance Survey
Date: ..... 1974/9 /3
Organization or Person: ..... VHLC-Dell Upton
CRM Event Notes or Comments: ....

CRM Event # 2,
Cultural Resource Management Event: ..... Reconnaissance Survey
Date: 9999/99/99
Organization or Person: ....
CRM Event Notes or Comments: ....

VIRGINIA
HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
SURVEY FORM

16-35

File Number

1. County Isle of Wight
   Town
   Street No.

   USGS Quad Name Bacon's Castle 7.5
   Quad Date
   Original Owner
   Original Use Grist Mill
   Present Owner
   Present Owner Address

   Present Use None

2. Historic Name Poplar Mill
   Present Name Wrenn's Mill
   Date or Period (exact or estimate) early 19C
   Architect
   Builder, craftsman, etc.
   Source of Name 19C owner
   Source of Date

3. No. stories (dormers count as ½ story):
   2 storys with full basement
   Wall construction
   frame with weatherboard
   Acreage

4. Historical Significance (Chain of Title, Families and Events, etc., connected with the property)

Wrenn's Mill is located on a site used for milling since the 17C. In 1695 Thomas Green bequeathed to his wife "the mill I purchased of Col. /Nathanie7 Bacon," who had patented 1075 acres of land on a branch of Pagan Creek in 1652.

Green's son William later willed the building to his son Bartholomew in 17[illegible], and Bartholomew Green in turn sold it to Peter Woodward.

When Woodward deeded the mill to James Baker in 1734, it was commonly known as Little Mill or Green's mill.

Three generations of Bakers--James, Richard and Lawrence, all of Shoals Bay--owned the site. From the Baker estate it passed to Charles Fulcham, who sold it to Mallory M. Todd in 1816. Finally the mill was sold to Charles F. Wrenn, a Shoals Bay resident, in 1821.

5. Architectural Significance (Note interesting interior and exterior details, etc., cite significant alterations and additions)

2 runs; buhrs with original mill furniture largely removed; concrete cased turbine replacing earlier overshot wheel; direct drive metal gears; earthen dam with steel conduit race; brick foundations originally 3 course American bond largely rebuilt; braced frame construction with common rafter roof.

6. Physical Condition

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Structure			X	
Grounds				
Neighborhood				

7. State potential threats to preservation of structure

Not in use

(over)

/ Mill Mark Accomac Valley 54

ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY FORM

VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building
Richmond, Virginia 23219

46-0035

1. County
Town
Street No.

USGS Quad Name
Quad Date
Scale
Original Owner
Original Use
Present Owner
Present Owner Address

Present Use

2. Historic Name Poplar Mill
Present Name Rex's Mill
Date or Period
Architect
Builder, craftsman, etc.

Source of Date

3. No. stories (dormers count as ½ story):

Wall construction:
Acreage

4. Historical Significance (Chain of Title, Families and Events, etc., connected with the property):

1st mention of mill at this spot was in 1685 when Thomas Grice willed his wife "the Mill I purchased of Col. Bacon."
Col. Nathaniel Bacon had patented 1,075 acres on a branch of Pigeon Creek in 1652
Thos. Grice's Exr. Wm. then Exr. son Bartholomew inherited it 1728
B. Grice sold to Peter Woodward
1734 Woodward to James Baker - then commonly known as Little Miller or Grice's Mill
owned by 3 generations of Bakers - James, Richard, & Lawrence who lived at Shad Bay
1816 Martha M. Todd bought mill site from Chas. Tulloh who had bought it from Baker estate
1821 Todd to Charles F. Mears who resided at Shad Bay

5. Architectural Significance (Note interesting interior and exterior details, etc. cite significant alterations and additions).

6. Condition of structure (check one):
(a) sound_____(b) in need of minor repairs_____(c) in need of major repairs_____
(d) unsound_____

7. State potential threats to preservation of structure:

8. List Number of Photographs _____Exterior _____Interior _____Outbuildings

9. Sources and Bibliography:

A. Published Sources (author, title, date, page number, etc.)

"Isle of Wight Landmark Misnamed Put Picturesque Reminder of Past," Daily Press, Jan. 12, 1964

B. Primary Sources (original or later drawings, old photographs, pictures, manuscripts and their location)

C. Names and Addresses of People Interviewed

10. Name, Address and Title of Recorder: D. T. Upton, architectural historian

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor St., Richmond

Date of Record

September 3, 1974

11. First Floor Plan (Rough Plan indicating arrangement of rooms, doorways, windows on ground floor)

12. Site Plan (Locate and identify outbuildings, dependencies, and significant farm structures)

8. List Number of Photographs _____Exterior _____Interior _____Outbuildings

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"Isle of Night Landmark Misnamed But Picturesque Reminder of Past" Daily Press Jan. 12, 1964

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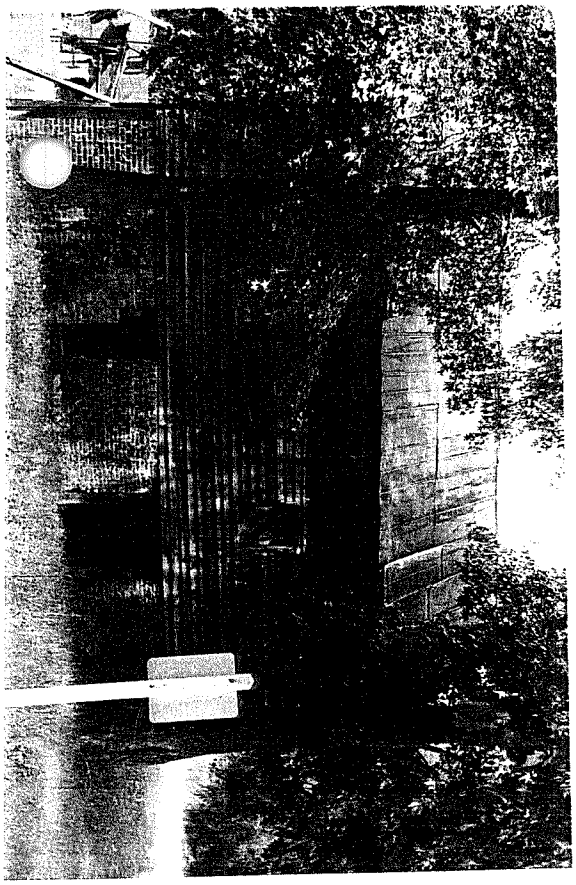
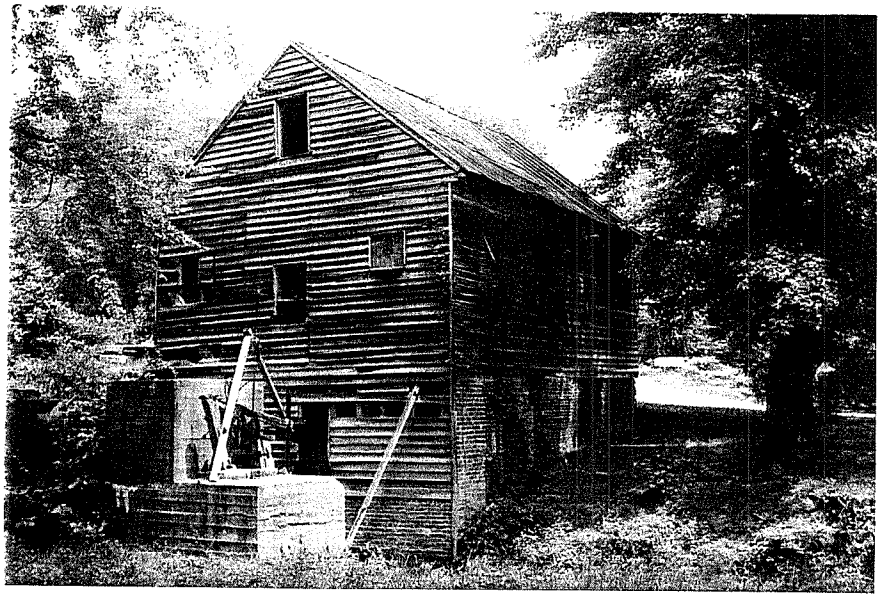
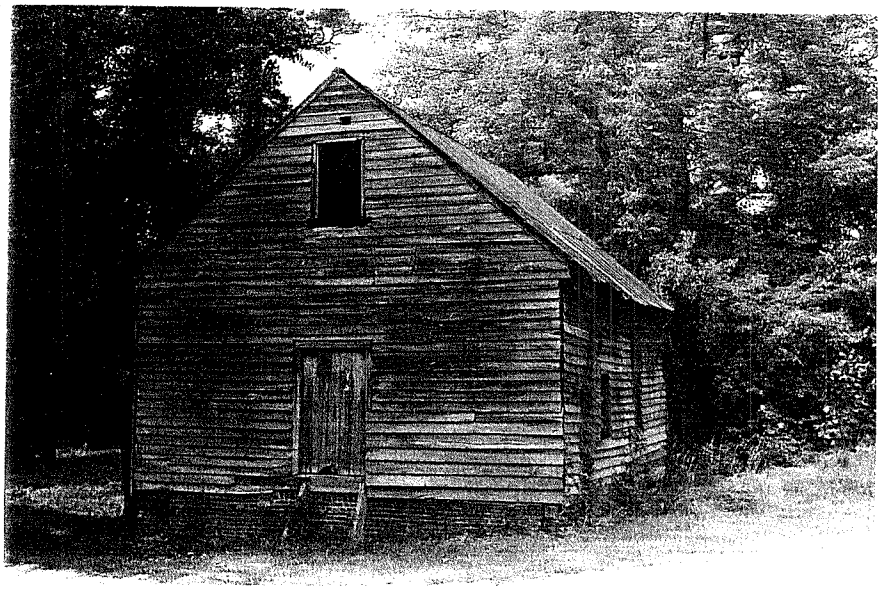
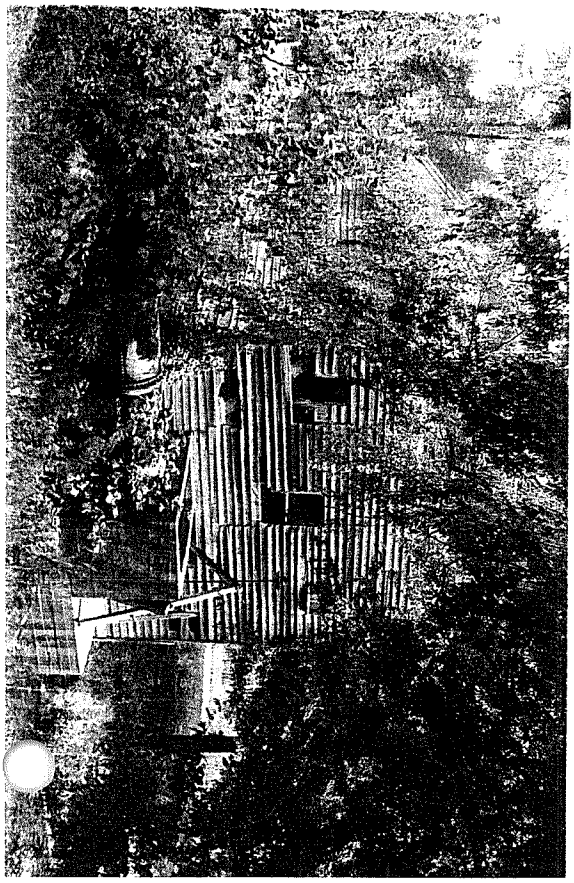
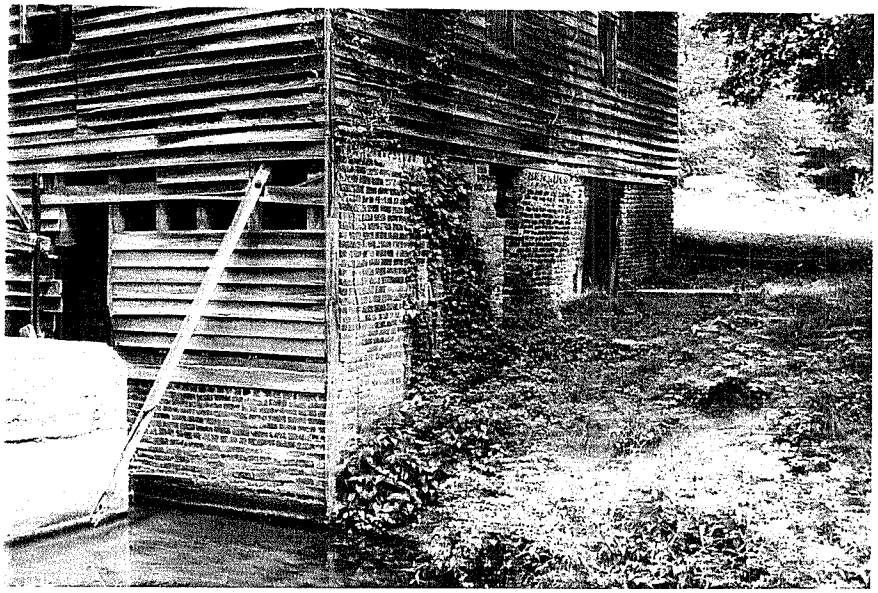
12. Site Plan (Locate and identify outbuildings, dependencies, and significant farm structures):











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Richmond Va 23220
Phone 804-648-8941
Smithfield Times

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County finds Wrenn's Mill offer too costly

The Isle of Wight Public Parks and Recreational Authority has unanimously turned down a proposal by the owner to purchase Wrenn's Mill, an historic grist mill located on Route 677 off Highway 10.

E. Carter Nettles Jr., the Commonwealth Attorney for Sussex County, submitted a memorandum to the Authority several months ago detailing the conditions of the sale.

The $100,000 price of the mill was only one of our concerns, said vice chairman of the Authority Alvin C. Rogers. Other certain restrictions, he said, included Nettles family having the right to hunt and fish forever on the property. "There were simply too many questions that needed to be answered, said Rogers.

He explained that the acreage of the site fluctuated from two to six acres and that a survey would be required to determine the exact acreage. In addition, the pond nearby was coming up for public auction, Rogers said. The Authority was also concerned about the narrowness of the road and the sharp left turn directly in front of the mill.

"If we looked at it, we saw a number of things that would create confusion," said Isle of Wight Parks and Recreation Director Alan Noglec. "We felt the road did not create a conducive situation for tourists.

He added that the Authority decided that what with the cost of the property and the cost of renovation to create a final product, the project was "out of reach and economically unfeasible."

"Our greatest concern was that Nettles wanted to keep the mill stones. Those are the working parts of the mill, the big grinding stones," said Rogers. He added that, if the Authority had to replace the stones then they would not be the original stones.

Nettles also requested that the Authority take out an option or buy the property before the end of October, according to Noglec.

That was another of our concerns, said Rogers. "We had to give Nettles such a quick answer – we didn't have time to do research, such as estimate the costs of renovation.

Noglec explained that the mill has been neglected for years. "But it can be saved. The major works are there. He added that, if the inner works were missing, it would take years and would be extremely expensive to repair.

The mill is in a collapsing state. Many boards are missing and weeds are growing all over the building. It is open to the weather and is decaying.

The Authority concluded in October that it would cost the county more than it would be willing to spend. "We didn't see how the county could afford to be responsible for a project way out in the country which would require a lot of security from vandalism," said Rogers. "It was simply too much to ask what with renovations, security and upkeep."

The project, which would have been a joint effort between the county and the Historical society, was to create a historic site. Rogers compared the area to Hayden's Lane off Main Street in Smithfield.

"We wanted to renovate the mill and make it operational," Noglec explained. "We wanted an aesthetic display that people could have appreciated as they drove by."

If large numbers of tourists come to visit, Noglec said, then the Authority could actually have the mill operating and sell the product.

Wrenn's Mill, at the end of Route 677 in Isle of Wight, will not become a tourist attraction this year, as the Parks and Recreational Authority decided not to purchase the property from the owner. The mill has been in the Nettles' family for more than 40 years.

Between the years of 1978 and 1980, the Nettles attempted to renovate the mill. Nettles said he and his wife laid blocks, secured the roof, put down clapboard, built steps and flowed the water. Unfortunately, vandals kept interrupting the work.

The six acre site has been in Nettle's family for years and the attorney has a real interest in renovation. "I guess he feels a real obligation to create something of historical significance," said Noglec. "And to see it done by some type of agency that can appreciate what it is and not develop the land."

Nettles, obtained the land with the mill in 1975 from his father Dr. E.C. Nettles Sr. and his mother, Louise. The land has belonged to the Nettles since 1942 and was running until the 1950's, according to Nettles.

Many individuals have owned the mill at one time or another, however. In the deed book in Isle of Wight courthouse, records show that the property originally belonged to the infamous Colonel Nathaniel Bacon back in the mid 1600's.

The land was purchased by Thomas Green and the first mention of a mill came in 1685 when Green bequeathed to his wife "the mill I purchased from Col. Bacon."

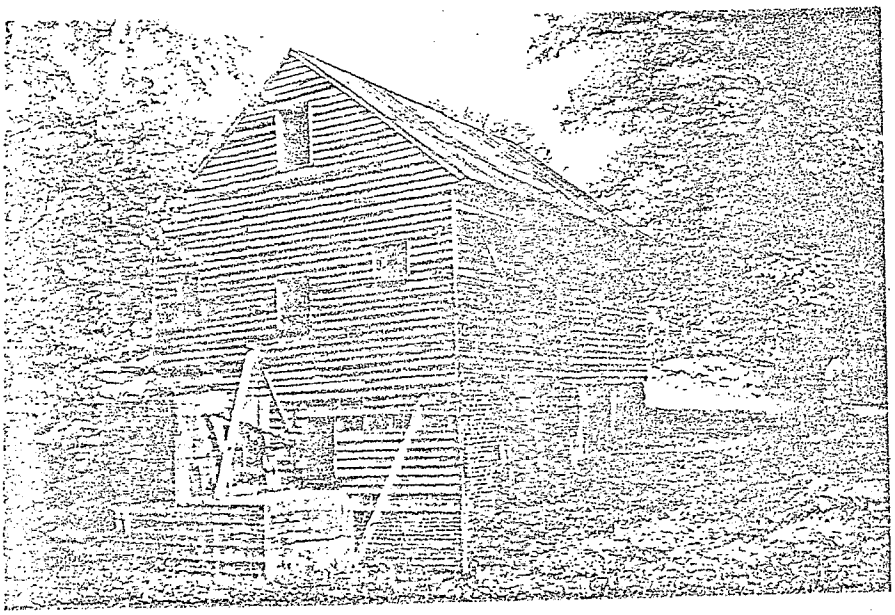
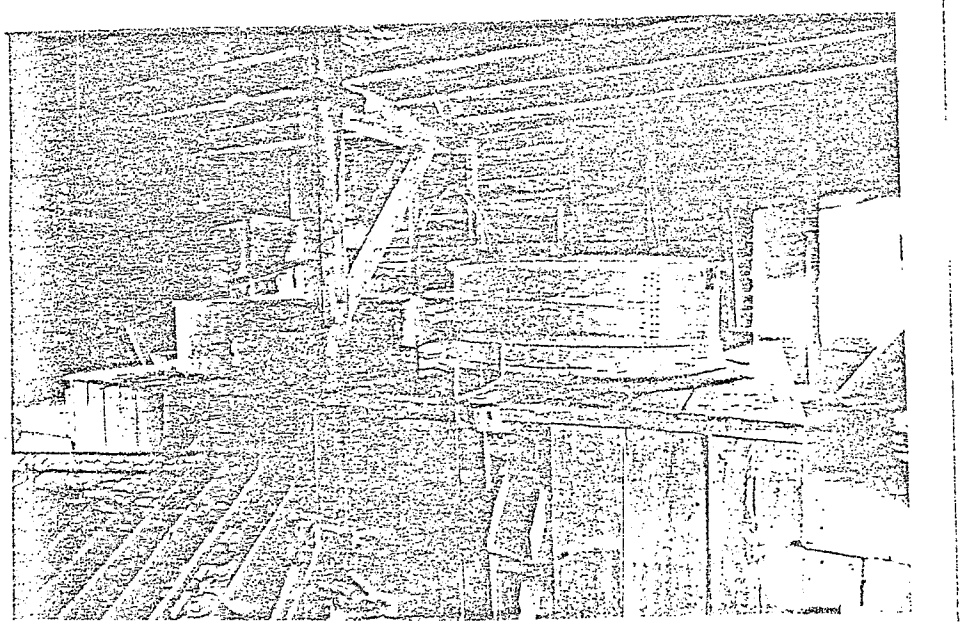
By 1734, when the land was sold to James Baker, it was known as the "Little Mill" or "Green's Mill." It remained in the Baker family for three generations until Mallory Todd bought it in 1816 from Charles Fulgham who had acquired it from the Baker Estate.

The first Wrenn purchased the mill in 1820, according to the courthouse record books.

"I don't think this is a project we can think about at this time," said Rogers. "Maybe in the future. Right now there are many other greater concerns. We have not closed the door but left it open for a future date."

Isle of Wight Co.
(Bacon's Castle 7.5)

Wrenn's Mill

Frame with weatherboard.
2-stories with full basement.
gable roof.
Built early 19th c.

2 runs buhrs with original mill furniture largely removed; concrete cased turbine replacing earlier overshot wheel; direct drive metal gears; earthen dam with steel conduit race; brick foundations originally 3 course American bond largely rebuilt.